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A
S E R M O N,
PREACHED AT THE MEETING-HOUSE IN THE
O L D J E W R Y,
ON THE TWENTY-EIGHTH OF JUNE,
1795,

UPON OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF THE
Rev. ROGER FLEXMAN, D. D.

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
ON THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF THE SAME MONTH,
IN THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

BY
ABRAHAM REES, D.D. F.R.S.

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MEMORANDUM

FOR THE RECORD

DATE: 1900

BY: J. H. M. O. N.

TO: THE SECRETARY OF THE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, D. C.



ANNEXED TO THE

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NAVY DEPARTMENT

FOR THE YEAR 1900

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

1900

HEBREWS ii. 15.

*And deliver them who, through fear of death,
were all their life time subject to bondage.*

SUCH is the declared design of our Saviour's mission and undertaking: a design, which cannot less than prepossess us in his favour, and excite, in every reflecting mind, sentiments of veneration and gratitude. There are none of the human race, whatever be their condition or their character, who are not liable to the evil from which he proposes to deliver them, and who have not actually experienced the distress for which he provides relief.

It is appointed for all men once to die ; and every man has some intervals of anxiety and terror in the prospect of dissolution. The fear of death is a passion which the Creator has implanted in our frame. It is often alarmed, and not easily suppressed. Under proper direction and restraint, its influence is beneficial ; but it has often prevailed to a degree that is humiliating and distressing. It is, therefore, an inquiry of no small moment, how this passion may be kept within due bounds, and made subservient to the useful purposes for which the Author of our nature designed it, without degrading our piety into superstition, and depriving us of that mental tranquillity and self-possession, which our religion is intended to promote. The attempt to annihilate this passion is impracticable. Besides, the constitution of our nature, the condition of our being, and the security of our virtue forbid it. But as much of our comfort depends upon its being properly restrained and governed, we cannot be inattentive to the lessons, nor regardless of the assistances, which are afforded us for this purpose.

Reason and philosophy have, in every age, exerted their utmost efforts to overcome the fear of death : and it must be acknowledged, that they have suggested a variety of considerations, which tend to diminish the distressing influence of this passion. But the arguments of unassisted reason and philosophy have been calculated to produce *submission* to an event that is unavoidable, which is the common lot of all mankind, and in the prospect of which reluctance and timidity are useless and pernicious ; rather than that *voluntary surrender* at the appointed and awful period, or that *peaceful confidence* in the view of it, which are the effects of faith in God and the Redeemer, and of the hope of immortality. They were the speculations of a few contemplative men, who, in their calm and tranquil moments of reflection, and whilst they considered death as a distant evil, reasoned themselves into a contempt of its terrors : but they were not adapted to the multitude, equally needing relief with themselves ; nor were they capable of administering consolation and support in the hour of actual trial. The reasonings

of philosophy were too subtle and refined for the bulk of mankind. They were too feeble to controul the passions of the human heart in the moment of its anxiety and alarm. They were too dubious and unsatisfactory to sustain and cheer the sinking spirit amidst the agonies of expiring nature.

The only sufficient remedy against the fear of death is that, which the principles and hopes of Christianity supply. These are the only effectual means of our deliverance from the distressing bondage, which this passion occasions. This will appear, if we consider what are the circumstances which render death formidable, and what provision Christianity hath made for our rescue from the fear of it.

We may observe that “the visible change which death produces in the human frame is an object of terror.” The effects of accident, disease and decay, which do not terminate in immediate dissolution, are nevertheless, in many cases, awful and distressing. When we behold the friend or companion,

panion, who exhibited every appearance of health and spirits, whose sprightliness and activity we have been accustomed to admire, emaciated by painful or lingering disorders, oppressed with melancholy, or trembling with weakness, we feel emotions of surprise and concern, which are not easily suppressed. Allied by one common nature, and subject to the evils we deplore, whilst we shed the tear of sympathy, we cannot help being anxious and alarmed on our own account, and dreading the danger against which we have no certain security.

But the effect which death produces is more awful: and to this we are all alike exposed. The state to which death reduces men of every character and condition, and the change which takes place in that part of our frame, which is the object of our senses, are humbling and afflictive. We shudder in viewing the lifeless remains of the once beautiful, robust and active; of those who instructed us by their wisdom, and amused us with their vivacity; and we sigh in reflecting, that the grave is the repository

to which we must speedily consign those, who were the objects of our highest admiration and delight. In contemplating the change which death produces in our corporeal frame, when all our vital and active powers, and every amiable and admired quality are apparently destroyed ; we cannot forbear regarding it as an object of terror. We cannot but tremble in the prospect of the conflict we must undergo, when the termination of it is so awful.

The approaches of death are, indeed, commonly gentle and gradual ; and we have reason to think, that many have endured, on other occasions, more painful trials than that which precedes dissolution. To the imagination however, which anticipates its effect, it appears peculiarly formidable ; and it is natural to wish for corresponding support in this hour of extremity ; in that hour, when flesh and heart fail, and when human succour can administer no relief. Without the prospect of assistance and support at this season, and of ultimate rescue, the natural firmness of the human mind will be overcome
by

by the terrors that attend it. More especially when we further consider,

“ That death appears to sense to be the “close of our being.” The Creator has formed us with a strong attachment to life, endowed us with a desire of its continuance, and inspired us with a horror of its final termination. These principles are implanted in our constitution for wise and useful purposes; and they naturally produce a dread of dissolution. In the divine intention, existence is a blessing. As such we eagerly retain it, and we surrender it with reluctance. We recur to various methods for preserving and prolonging it. We are easily alarmed by every appearance of danger. The scene to which we have been accustomed, we quit with regret. We cannot avoid being terrified by the apprehension of closing our eyes for ever on those objects with which the Author of our being has encompassed us for our gratification and delight, and to which habit and use have created a very strong attachment. Besides,

“ The

“ The close of life is the conclusion of all
 “ our active employments and pursuits, and
 “ of all those schemes and purposes, which
 “ engage the attention and exercise the powers of the human mind.” In action and labour there is delight. The employment of our corporeal and mental faculties contributes to our happiness. Without due exercise of both, life would be joyless. The pause occasioned by bodily disorders is unpleasant ; and, therefore, the stillness of the grave, in which there is no work nor device, must be much more awful. To which we may add, that plans and designs, ever new and various through the successive stages of life, which death prevents our accomplishing, serve to create diffidence and terror in the prospect of it. To whatever distance the period of our dissolution may be removed, it will find us flattering ourselves with hopes, forming schemes and purposes for our own advantage, or for that of others, and pursuing objects, the attainment of which requires farther time than the boundaries of mortality allow. Let the advances of death be more slow or more rapid, when he actually arrives,

rives, all will have reason to lament, that many of their purposes are broken off, that they are disappointed in the execution of many important and useful designs, and that many flattering expectations are frustrated. To human labour and human wishes there is no limit. Life consists more in pursuit and hope than in attainment. And, therefore, an event, which checks the progress of our faculties and prevents the accomplishment of a thousand purposes and desires, which we are ever prone to indulge and cherish, must appear formidable to men of every age and of every station. Moreover,

“ Death, to the eye of sense, and independently of the principles and hopes which religion inspires, is the appointed boundary of our enjoyment and happiness.” In that state of seeming inactivity and insensibility to which death reduces us, every avenue of pleasure is closed; every capacity of happiness is annihilated. Our senses and appetites can administer no more to our gratification and delight; and all our mental powers are, at least apparently, suspended

pended in their exercise, and incapable of contributing to our satisfaction and felicity.

We may add, " That death, considered as
 " the termination of our existence, bears a
 " very formidable aspect on our mutual con-
 " nection and intercourse, as social beings,
 " endeared to each other by a variety of
 " reciprocal interests and obligations." That
 we shall behold man no more with the in-
 habitants of the world ; that the most im-
 portant and useful connections, in which
 mutual affection and dependence are most
 closely intertwined, should be finally dissolved;
 that love and gratitude and mutual com-
 placency should for ever cease; and that the
 instructive and pleasing intercourse of wis-
 dom and friendship should terminate, are
 considerations which, more than any other,
 array death in robes of terror, and represent
 him as the peculiar dread of nature. With-
 out the prospect of reunion, the sorrow of
 separation from those whom we revere and
 love would be inconsolable. We should
 tremble, when death approached to others
 or to ourselves. We should expect with
 painful

painful anxiety that moment which severed us from our beloved associates and friends, and depart with regret to the dreary mansion of solitude and oblivion. I observe further,

“ That there is another view of death, in
 “ which it appears formidable to all who
 “ contemplate it, whatever be their disposi-
 “ tion and character.” As an introduction
 to future being and retribution, guilt trem-
 bles in the anticipation of it, and the diffi-
 dence of the upright and self-approved
 causes some degree of solicitude and fear.
 The darkness that covers the unseen state
 renders it awful to those, who cannot but
 apprehend that they shall survive death.
 They stand, with no inconsiderable suspense
 and anxiety, on the borders of an unex-
 plored region ; and uncertain whither they
 may be conveyed and what may be their
 future condition, the prospect of a removal
 alarms and disquiets them. Ignorant how-
 ever as they are, in a variety of respects,
 concerning futurity, they feel the conviction,
 that at death they shall enter on a scene of
 retribution ; that their conduct is subject to
 the

the scrutiny of an omnipresent and righteous Judge ; and that their condition will depend upon his judgment and sentence. To the tribunal of impartial rectitude they proceed with reluctance and timidity ; and a variety of disquieting apprehensions occurs to their minds in the prospect of the account they must render, and of the solemn consequences of a decision, that shall fix their eternal state. These apprehensions they cannot avoid, when death approaches ; when the near views of it constrain them to reflect on their past conduct and on their future destiny. Connecting in imagination the close of life with the period of judgment, and convinced that, when death has executed his office, their state is fixed and unalterable, the hour of their dissolution must appear unspeakably solemn and interesting. To the guilty and self-condemned a thousand images of terror will present themselves. And even to those who are conscious of their own integrity, and at the same time humble and diffident in the review of their imperfections and failings, judgment and eternity are objects of anxious expectation.

expectation. The near view of these objects is apt to discompose and alarm the most secure. Some degree of hesitation and fear is inseparable from human frailty and error. The prospect of appearing before a holy, righteous, and all-knowing Judge, and of receiving sentence corresponding to the real character, and determining the everlasting state, is sufficient to disturb the tranquillity of the best minds, and has often proved the occasion of terror and distress. It has been the occasion of distress and terror, notwithstanding all the advantages and assistances which religion has afforded; and we may well conceive, how lamentable must have been the condition of those, who were altogether destitute of the light and influence which religion imparts.

Having illustrated the principal causes of that fear of death, by reason of which many have been all their life-time subject to bondage; we shall now proceed to shew, what provision Christianity has made for our deliverance from this distressing passion.

It

It is no inconsiderable advantage, " That
 " it affords us the most satisfactory evi-
 " dence of the dominion of divine Pro-
 " vidence, and the most encouraging assu-
 " rance of needful succour in a season of
 " distress." The doctrine and history of
 our blessed Saviour evince this animating
 truth, that the interests of mankind, and es-
 pecially those of the upright and pious, in
 every period and condition of their being,
 are subject to the attention and care of a
 wisdom that cannot err, of a power that
 cannot be controuled, and of a goodness that
 is immutable and everlasting. In all their
 difficulties and trials God is their ever-pre-
 sent witness and guardian. No event can
 befall them without his knowledge and per-
 mission. They cannot be placed in any
 situation so solitary, so distressed, and so
 helpless, as to exclude his compassionate
 notice and almighty succour. Death itself
 is subject to his direction and controul. All
 the circumstances that attend it are perfectly
 known to him. His presence and agency
 are unconfined. They pervade the whole
 system of nature, both material and intellec-
 tual.

tual. In every place, in every state, in every moment, he is not far from any one of us. The mind of man, as well as the material universe, is the habitation of God. He can manifest the tokens of his presence and the energy of his spirit to our souls as well as to our corporeal senses.

How justly, then, does the Deity claim our confidence in every season of trial and distress! and more especially in that awful moment, when every other object of dependence shall fail! In the valley of the shadow of death, no friendly associate can accompany us to soothe the anguish and support the fortitude of our spirits. When all subordinate instruments of relief and sources of consolation withdraw, and we are constrained to pursue the last gloomy stage of the journey of life, without one cheering companion to attend us, God is still with us. In that solemn hour, it is his sole prerogative to administer consolation. This is the hour of his triumph over the otherwise unaided weakness and exigence of man. He challenges to himself the benignant of-

fice of being the strength and joy of our hearts. Assured of his presence and support, shall we fear any evil? "Retire," may we then say to the anxious weeping witnesses of our last conflict; "your power to sustain us can reach no farther. Your kind attention can yield no balm of comfort to our minds; your sympathy can neither alleviate our distress nor encourage our hope. God has now taken the charge of us. Under his conduct and care, we shall be secure and happy." Let us look forward to a dying hour with such sentiments as these;—its terrors will vanish; nay, they will be converted into confidence and triumph;—a confidence and triumph resembling those of the great Captain of our salvation, when in the hour of his last agony he surrendered himself to the divine will, and there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.

"Another advantage, which we derive from Christianity, for conquering the fear of death, is the assurance it gives us of renewed and continued existence in the future

“ ture world.” The dominion of death is abolished. Life and immortality are brought to the clearest light by the doctrine and promises and resurrection of our Saviour. The conjectures and hopes of unenlightened nature are confirmed. The dawn of reason and philosophy is brightened into noon-day. The cloud that overspread the invisible state is dispersed. The horrors of annihilation are fled. We may stand on the verge of life, composed and fearless; and look through the vale of death to a region of renewed existence, exercise and enjoyment. Recovered by the grace of the Gospel and the undertaking of the Redeemer to the hope of immortality, we may indulge the expectation of a more excellent and permanent existence than that of this mortal state, of nobler employments, and of a more complete and durable felicity, than those of which our nature is capable in our present condition of frailty and imperfection. We may also exult in the prospect of being united to kindred spirits, and of regaining, in the great multitude of glorified saints who shall be assembled at the resurrection

of the just, those associates and friends, whose pious precepts and virtuous example and delightful intercourse we have justly accounted our highest privilege and happiness in the present world, and the recollection of which, long since lost to us, has often pierced our hearts with regret and anguish.

Fortified and animated by these reflections, can we not contemplate death without dismay? Shall we start back from his approaches? Shall we regard him as the minister of divine indignation, as the king of terrors, as the enemy of our nature? Shall we not rather say, his whole aspect is changed? His frowns are converted into benignant smiles. He is the herald of liberty and the messenger of salvation. He comes under a divine commission, not to hurt or destroy, but to relieve and to make us happy; to remove us from one district of the empire of God, where the sky is often overcast with clouds and charged with tempests, or, without a figure, where sin and mortality, with their attendant evils, prevail,

prevail, into another more favoured region, fit for the abode of perfect and glorified beings, where virtue and happiness are unalloyed, uninterrupted, and everlasting.

After all it may be said, that, though such a state of perfection and blessedness be the promised inheritance of the righteous, yet how shall human degeneracy, frailty, and demerit attain to it? "The relief which Christianity has provided extends to the case of mankind, considered as depraved, infirm and guilty." It furnishes indeed no antidote against the fear of death to the wicked and impenitent. To such it aggravates all the terrors which uninstructed reason suggests. It assures *them*, that death is the introduction to a renewed life of tribulation and anguish, under the displeasure of a holy Sovereign and just Judge. Nevertheless, Christianity is accompanied with a powerful and divine influence in recovering sinners to repentance and holiness, in preserving and promoting their obedience and virtue, and in preparing them for the presence of God, and the blessedness of immortality.

talities. It is, in this respect, the power of God unto salvation. It implants and cherishes in the human mind the seeds of future and everlasting happiness; and, by contributing to the security and improvement of our virtue and piety, it ensures our conquest over death, and our escape, at the appointed period, from the grave.

Besides, Christianity not only directs and aids us in the exercise of those virtues and graces which are the principles of a happy immortality, and which, in their own nature and by divine promise, render us capable of continued existence, when the mortal part of our frame has mouldered in the dust; but it reinvests us with the title to future being, which we had forfeited by sin, provides an indemnity against the effects of transgression, and recovers us from the doom of death which sin had incurred, to the hope of immortality. With this view the Son of God died for our offences, and rose again for our justification. His death was, in the counsels of infinite wisdom and mercy, the appointed and accepted ransom

ransom of our lives ; and his resurrection was a visible testimony to the efficacy of his interposition as our Redeemer from eternal death. Because he lives, we shall live also. Thus ample and satisfactory is the provision which Christianity has made for our pardon and acceptance, and for our ultimate advancement, notwithstanding our demerit and defective obedience, to everlasting life and happiness. On this ground of the mediation and promise of Christ, the humble penitent may triumph over death and the grave. The sins which thou hast repented of and forsaken, we may now say to such, shall not rise up in judgment against thee. Mercy shines through the gloom of guilt. The diffidence of an imperfect virtue derives encouragement and humble boldness from the grace of the Gospel. Its divine Author has ensured victory and rescue to the penitent and upright.

“ How important and excellent is that
 “ divine dispensation which delivers us from
 “ the fear of death ! ” The evil is univer-
 sal. The relief provided for it is sufficient

in every case of distress, unless we neglect to avail ourselves of it. And can we neglect to avail ourselves of it, without ingratitude to God, and a very culpable inattention to our own safety and happiness? The faith and hope, with which Christianity inspires its votaries, will enable them to overcome the slavish and disquieting fear of dissolution. Some degree of dread in the view of it may be unavoidable: but if we imbibe the principles and conform to the precepts of our holy religion, we shall cease to tremble in the contemplation of death. We shall acquiesce in its approaches, and surrender with fortitude and tranquillity at the divine summons.

“What gratitude do we owe for the
 “means of relief which God has afforded
 “us; and how solicitous should we be to
 “express our gratitude, by possessing our
 “minds with those reflections and hopes,
 “which the doctrine and mediation of our
 “Saviour suggest!”

That we may be entitled to the benefit
 resulting

resulting from these reflections and hopes, let the course of our lives be regulated by the conviction that we are dying and accountable, and that our future state depends upon our present character and conduct.

Nothing deserves our attention and concern so much as a well-grounded confidence and hope in the prospect of death and eternity. These are subjects of meditation, which are common to all, and which must often occur. It is therefore of great moment to every man's peace and self-possession, that he should be able to contemplate them without distressing terror. If the image of death, whenever it presents itself, should alarm and disquiet us, we shall have few calm and tranquil intervals in a state where we are surrounded with the emblems and subject to the symptoms of mortality. Let faith and religion secure us against anxiety and terror; and may they to such a degree possess our minds, and influence our conduct, that we may experience no disquieting fears, when flesh and heart shall fail us!

“ When

“ When the beneficial influence of Chris-
 “ tianity, as an antidote to doubt and fear
 “ in the prospect of dissolution, is attested
 “ by the declarations and conduct of our
 “ pious friends, we are furnished with new
 “ motives to gratitude, and with new in-
 “ ducements to hold fast the profession of
 “ our faith in it without wavering.” We
 thus learn, that the efficacy of our holy
 religion in divesting death of its terrors,
 and fortifying the mind under the apprehen-
 sions of futurity, is not imaginary and
 delusive. It is as real as it is important ;
 and it has been actually illustrated in cir-
 cumstances of trial. During the progress of
 decay, and under the occasional anguish of
 a painful disorder, its power has been ob-
 served and acknowledged. The visible ap-
 proaches of death, with a variety of attend-
 ant evils, have not been sufficient to deject
 and intimidate the mind that has been sup-
 ported by the testimony of conscience, and
 cheered by the hope of immortality.

In the closing scene of the exemplary life
 of our deceased friend, the Rev. Roger
 Flexman,

Flexman, D. D. these observations have been signally verified. The review of it affords both instruction and comfort to survivors. It serves to evince the utility of religion, and to impart consolation to those who have been bereaved of a parent or a friend.

But I cannot content myself with this transient testimony to the distinguished worth of such a friend, with whom I have been in habits of intimate acquaintance for more than thirty years, and who, in the last years of his life, has been a constant attendant on public worship in this place.

Dr. Flexman was born on the 22d of February in the year 1707-8, at Great Torrington in the county of Devon. His father was a manufacturer, of considerable reputation in that place. He manifested an early inclination to the Christian Ministry: and such was his proficiency in classical learning, that he was admitted, at the age of fifteen years, into the Dissenting Academy at Tiverton, under the care of the Rev. John Moore. His literary improvement and general

Aeral conduct, during the five years which he spent at the academy, gave such satisfaction to his tutor, that he solicited his assistance in the conduct of the institution. His views, however, were directed to the public exercise of his profession, for which he was well qualified, and to which he was ardently devoted. In 1730 he was ordained at Modbury ; but he did not continue long in this situation. Having officiated at Crediton for five years, and at Chard for four years, probably without any views to a permanent connection, he settled at Bradford, in Wiltshire, about the latter end of the year 1739. In 1747, he removed to Rotherhithe ; and in the same year he married the daughter of Mr. Yerbury, a respectable member of the society at Bradford. In this new situation his ministerial labours were acceptable and useful ; and they were prosecuted with unremitting attention and assiduity. But in a course of years the congregation with which he was connected, suffered very much by the death of some members, and the consequent extinction of families, and by the removal of others. The precarious state of
 Dr,

Dr. Flexman's health rendered it necessary for him to withdraw from stated service, and to reside in a part of the town where he could enjoy the benefit of the medical advice and assistance of a friend, to whom he had been accustomed to apply in the paroxysms of a disorder under which he laboured. These concurring circumstances induced him, in the year 1783, to surrender his pastoral relation to the society at Rotherhithe, and in consequence of that event the society was dissolved. He continued, however, to officiate statedly at the morning lecture, to which he was chosen in 1754, whenever his turn occurred, for several years after the resignation of his pastoral office; and he preached occasionally in other places, as long as his health and spirits would allow.

Dr. Flexman's constitution was naturally strong; and his health, for many years, was seldom interrupted. But towards the close of his life he was subject to frequent attacks of a painful disorder, which were perilous and alarming, which discomposed a mind
that

that was naturally calm and gentle, and which rendered him incapable of those public duties, in the performance of which he took great delight.

Of his mental talents and literary acquirements, those who knew him, before the access of that debility, which was occasioned partly by his advanced age, but principally by the disorder that afflicted him, entertained a high opinion. There have been few persons, who possessed a more extensive and accurate acquaintance with the history of England than Dr. Flexman. His memory was retentive to a degree that is seldom paralleled. It superseded the necessity of recurring to any written authorities; and it served him for the recital of dates and facts, and very minute circumstances, which the most laborious research found a difficulty in ascertaining. Possessed of this faculty, for which he was eminently distinguished, he was capable of communicating important and useful information on a variety of occasions; and he was often consulted by men of the first rank and character in the kingdom.

dom. In discussions of a political nature, as well as in researches of a literary kind, his knowledge has been of very considerable service. It gave him access to many members of both houses of parliament, who availed themselves of hints and references with which he supplied them ; and it introduced him into an acquaintance with several persons of eminence, both as scholars and as writers. The only pecuniary advantage of any moment, which he derived from connections of this kind, was that which arose from his appointment to be one of the Compilers of the General Index to the Journals of the House of Commons. The 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th volumes, comprehending an interesting period of parliamentary proceedings, viz. from 1660 to 1697, were assigned to him. This elaborate work was begun in 1776 and completed in 1780. The plan upon which he conducted it was submitted to the consideration of a committee of the house soon after his appointment in 1770 ; and the execution of it was much approved and liberally rewarded.

We ought, however, to observe, that Dr. Flexman's knowledge in this way, and his attention in acquiring it, did not supersede his sedulous application to those subjects that were immediately connected with his profession as a Christian Minister. The study of the Scriptures, and particularly of the New Testament in the original language, was an employment to which he devoted much time, and in which he took peculiar pleasure. From this source he deduced his sentiments on theological subjects. They were the result of impartial and diligent inquiry. He maintained them with firmness and zeal, but at the same time with a liberal and candid temper towards those who differed from him. With the sentiments of your late venerable pastor, Dr. Amory, those of Dr. Flexman very much concurred; and "his sentiments," says his excellent biographer*, "with regard to both natural and revealed religion, nearly agreed with those of Dr. Samuel Clarke, and of the eminent divines who were coadjutors with

* Biographia Britannica, Vol. i. Art. AMORY.

“ that great man. He did not, therefore,
 “ fall in with the Socinian principles, which
 “ of late have been so warmly defended :
 “ neither did he reject the natural evidences
 “ of a life to come, or the notion of a sepa-
 “ rate state, as several ingenious moderns
 “ have done.”

This abstract contains a concise and exact
 account of the theological sentiments of our
 deceased friend. He was a strenuous advo-
 cate for the pre-existent dignity of Christ,
 and the personality of the Holy Spirit. He
 maintained the essential distinction between
 the soul and the body, and the liberty of the
 human will, in opposition to Materialists
 and Necessarians. If in the latter period of
 his life he expressed himself with more
 than common ardour on the subjects of re-
 ligious controversy, it was when he took
 occasion to avow his opposition to opinions,
 which he conceived to be no less prejudicial
 in their practical influence, than inconsistent
 with the dictates of sound reason and the
 doctrines of divine Revelation. But his ar-
 dour was united to the most comprehensive
 charity and good will. Of many persons,
 C who

who held the tenets which he disapproved, he entertained a high opinion ; and he was in habits of acquaintance and friendship with them.

Dr. Flexman's integrity was no less laudable than his zeal for what he apprehended to be important truth, and his candour towards persons of different sentiments. He was intimately acquainted with several clergymen of distinguished character, such as Dr. Sykes, Dr. Gregory Sharpe, Mr. Taylor, Dr. Majendie, and many others of considerable rank in the church : and we have already observed, that he had frequent opportunities of free intercourse with persons of exalted station and extensive influence. It is not unreasonable to imagine, that he might have obtained independence, if not affluence, by means of the recommendation or patronage of such friends, if he had been disposed to seek or to accept it. We are assured, upon the best authority, that a considerable preferment in the church was actually offered him. But he continued to exercise his ministry among Protestant Dissenters, notwithstanding many difficulties and discouragements. Whilst he
highly

highly esteemed many members of the establishment, and was equally respected by them, he maintained his own profession without wavering. Whilst he avowed on all occasions a firm attachment to the fundamental principles of the British Constitution, and few persons better understood them, he approved himself an enlightened and strenuous advocate for civil and religious liberty. The satisfaction of conscious integrity alleviated the trials of his closing scene, and animated his hopes in the prospect of a future world.

The piety and devotional spirit of our deceased friend were distinguishing traits of his character. In his compositions and public performances, these qualities were conspicuous: and they were exemplified in his personal attendance on the social institutions of religion, when he became incapable of conducting the worship of his fellow-christians. Not to add, that they were sources of relief and comfort to him amidst those trials, which exercised his faith and patience in the concluding period of his life.

Of Dr. Flexman's compositions for the pulpit, it will be sufficient to say, that they were judicious and instructive: and his mode of delivery was grave and solemn. His preaching was adapted, both as to the matter and the manner of it, to inform the understanding, and to impress the heart. Of the four sermons which he published, one was delivered in this place, on occasion of the decease of the late Dr. Amory; and whilst it explains and enforces the important exhortation, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," it presents the example of an excellent and venerable friend to our imitation, and the recompense of fidelity as a motive for our encouragement.

On his other publications it is needless now to enlarge. He was employed on various occasions, as an editor of the works of others; and he particularly excelled in giving correct lists of different publications, and ascribing them to their proper authors. He was also an occasional writer in several periodical publications, some of which have been

been long ago discontinued ; but others of them retain their reputation to the present day.

His abilities and various attainments justly intitled him to the honour of a degree of Doctor in Divinity, which was conferred upon him in 1770 by the Marischal College of Aberdeen.

As a husband and a parent, and in all the relations of social life, Dr. Flexman claims respectful remembrance. Of his wife he was bereaved about six years ago, after a happy union of forty-one years : and of his three children, two daughters survived their mother, and contributed, by their affectionate attention, to soothe the sorrows and alleviate the trials of his closing scene. His son died many years ago in India. To our deceased friend, the dutiful regard of his daughters, and their happy settlement, must have afforded peculiar satisfaction ; and I trust, they and those with whom they are connected will long retain his parental counsels and his personal virtues in grateful remembrance ;

remembrance ; and through every period of progressive life derive benefit from them, and consolation from the prospect of being reunited to their pious parents, in a state, where their union will be indissoluble and everlasting.

Having paid this tribute of respect to a much honoured friend, I shall conclude with recommending his example of piety and integrity, and of uniform attachment to the profession and duties of Christianity, to our esteem and imitation. It is by connecting the practice with the principles of our holy religion, that we shall be rescued by it from the distressing fear of dissolution, and enjoy tranquillity and hope in the near views of our last conflict. Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find thus prepared ! May we aspire after this blessedness in a course of Christian faith and holy obedience ! And may we wait all the days of our appointed time, till the period of its consummation shall arrive, and we are removed into a state where there shall be no more death ! Amen.



COMPILED by Dr. FLEXMAN.

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*Quæ prius hic illic varie dispersa jacebant,
Hic sunt ad proprium cuncta reducta locum.*

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